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AUTHOR Dewald, Nancy
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ABSTRACT

Project FREDD was initiated in 1974 as a cooperative effort by library and mental retardation agencies in the Waterbury, Connecticut area. The project utilized a bookmobile to route a special collection of books, media, and games to the mentally handicapped and information on mental retardation to their parents and teachers and to the community. Bookmobile stops were scheduled at special schools, sheltered workshops, and programs sponsored by area associations for the retarded in many local towns. Patrons were allowed to return borrowed materials to their local library. Publicity was provided by letters to the community, by media and magazine coverage, and by the mobility of the project van itself. From the experiences gained during the project period, several recommendations were made for the continuation of this program or one of similar intent, including types of material which proved to be most popular, the use of the Connecticar system for returning borrowed materials, the scheduling of stops, and the type and size of bookmobile to use. It was concluded that Project FREDD had positive effects in this specialized area of library service. (Author/SL)

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Free Resources for Educating the Developmentally Disabled

A Mobile Library Program of the Waterbury Regional Center and Central Connecticut Regional Center Co-Sponsored by the Connecticut State Library

Project Evaluation

June - 1975

IR 002 438

F O R E W O R D

The following is an evaluative report of the Mobile Library Project F.R.E.D.D. as submitted to the Connecticut State Library. The information provided includes records and reports completed by Ms. Candace C. Hall, part-time librarian employed during the initial project period from March to August, 1974; as well as materials compiled from January through June, 1975, by the project's current librarian Ms. Nancy H. Dewald. Activities, statistics, and specific recommendations for the continuation of this specialized library service are enumerated herein.

John DeLeo
Project Director

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Program Sponsors

B. Funding

C. Contents of the Collection

The Central Connecticut Regional Center and the Waterbury Regional Center operating under the Office of Mental Retardation, and in cooperation with the Connecticut State Library, have sponsored a specialized mobile library service known as F.R.E.D.D. (Free Resources for Educating the Developmentally Disabled). The primary objective of the project was to make appropriate library resource materials available and more easily accessible to those developmentally disabled individuals, their teachers, parents, and other interested persons residing in the towns encompassed by both Centers' regions. Another intent of this project was to have public librarians become more aware of the definite need for specialized library resources to be available for use by this handicapped population.

Project F.R.E.D.D. has been funded under the aegis

of Title I, Federal Library Services and Construction Act. The initial grant period extended from March to August, 1974, permitting the employment of a part-time librarian, and the grant was subsequently renewed during January, 1975, allowing for employment of a full-time librarian, whose termination date is scheduled for July 31, 1975.*

F.R.E.D.D's collection includes high-interest, low-vocabulary reading materials; records; filmstrips; picture books; teaching materials on subjects such as time, money, beginning reading, numbers; and an assortment of puppets, puzzles, and various educational toys. To supplement the collection, musical instruments, puppets, and constructive play material were borrowed from the Connecticut State Library Inter-Library Loan Center. Also, textbooks which were deemed appropriate for teachers and parents of the developmentally disabled were made available for loan on the bookmobile.

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*A copy of the original grant proposal is included within the Appendix.

During the initial weeks of the project periods, both librarians participated in in-service training sessions at each of the Regional Centers in an effort to understand better the characteristics and needs of the special population to be served. During March, 1974, organizational activities pursued by the librarian included the ordering and purchasing of materials for F.R.E.D.D. and scheduling specific locations for the bookmobile's visits. A questionnaire was devised and sent to public libraries, public schools, associations for retarded citizens, and other facilities serving the handicapped, seeking information concerning the facilities' materials, resources, and programs as well as those materials which they may have available to parents, teachers, and lay persons interested in the area of mental retardation.*

*A copy of this questionnaire, and the compiled results, may be found in the Appendix.

II. ACTIVITIES

A. 1974 Activities

B. 1975 Activities

C. Program Modifications

D. Publicity

An Open House was held at the Waterbury Regional Center in April, 1974, to introduce F.R.E.D.D. to all professionals involved in this field, interested citizens from the community, representatives from the State Office of Mental Retardation, and State Library personnel.

Following the Open House, F.R.E.D.D.'s scheduled tour throughout the two regions began. F.R.E.D.D. was located at public schools, libraries, the Regional Centers, shopping centers, and sheltered workshops in the towns of Derby, Beacon Falls, Waterbury, Thomaston, Wolcott, Cheshire, Prospect, Oakville, Plainville, Cromwell, Portland, Southington, Meriden, and Middletown. Many persons availed themselves of those specialized materials which F.R.E.D.D. had to offer.

In August, 1974, the initial project phase concluded, and in addition to her evaluation, the part-time librarian made several recommendations for more effective and efficient continuation of this specialized service.

In January, 1975, following a brief interim period, funding was renewed, and a full-time librarian engaged in re-initiating the F.R.E.D.D. project. Letters were sent to libraries, public schools, rest homes, and local associations for the retarded,

explaining the purpose of the project. Visits were made to public librarians in the Waterbury Region in an effort to discuss the program and its purpose, indicate the need for specialized library services to the developmentally disabled, and request their assistance in assuring that the materials borrowed from F.R.E.D.D. would be returned after use. As a matter of convenience, it was agreed that F.R.E.D.D.'s patrons could return borrowed materials to their local library, as these could be sent by Connecticar* to a library closer to the Waterbury Regional Center. Within the Central Connecticut Region, public librarians were sent a comprehensive letter which specified the rationale and delineated the services of F.R.E.D.D. which would be available to them. Procedures for the return of borrowed materials were similar to those chosen within the Waterbury area.

With these preparations underway F.R.E.D.D.'s collection as well as the professional collection of the Waterbury Regional Center was catalogued; and the bookmobile was scheduled for location

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*Connecticar, a delivery service of the Connecticut State Library, travels between all public libraries within the State as a means of facilitating exchange and return of library resource materials.

at schools, sheltered workshops, and programs sponsored by area associations for the retarded in the towns of Cheshire. Derby, Prospect, Waterbury, Watertown, Bristol, Southington, New Britain, Middletown, Durham, Wallingford, and Meriden. From the experiences derived during its first year of operation it had been indicated that response to F.R.E.D.D. was greatest when located at school sites. Consequently, during the current project period, F.R.E.D.D. was taken to facilities that served the developmentally disabled in expectation that a greater number of individuals could be reached.

When the bookmobile began its travels in 1975, it was determined that it would be at a scheduled centrally-located site for a period of one week, at which time special class students from schools within the vicinity could tour and avail themselves of F.R.E.D.D.'s resources. It was discovered, however, that in many instances, the arrangements for extra transportation of these students to visit F.R.E.D.D. proved quite burdensome. Therefore, it was planned that F.R.E.D.D. would move to different locations more frequently so as to be more conveniently accessible to these persons.

While introductory letters and the mobility of the bookmobile itself served to inform interested community persons of the F.R.E.D.D. project, publicity for the program was believed to be especially beneficial in so far as increased public awareness could be measured. During the project's onset in 1974, publicity was provided by the Chiefs of Volunteer Services from both of the Regional Centers. During the 1975 project period, this service was provided via the State Library's Public Information Officer. The efforts of these persons resulted in extensive media coverage within several regional newspapers and on local radio stations. Highlights of project F.R.E.D.D. were featured on Channel 8 and Channel 30 television; and an article concerning F.R.E.D.D. appeared in the August, 1974, issue of the PCMR Message, published by the President's Committee on Mental Retardation. Additional articles appeared in the January, 1975, issue of American Libraries and the May, 1975, issue of School Library Journal. Many of these public information materials concerning F.R.E.D.D. were compiled and along with the original grant proposal, the notebook collection was submitted in February, 1975, by the Waterbury Regional Center as an entry for the John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Awards Contest.

III. LEVEL OF RESPONSE

A. Statistics of Visitors to F.R.E.D.D.

B. Circulation Statistics

The number and type of visitors to the bookmobile in 1974 and 1975 are shown on the chart below:

Visitors	1974 62 days	1975 35 days
Total	92	883
Parents	18	9
Librarians	22	5
Students	0*	539
Teachers	130	130
Clients	675	189
Out of Town	0	2
Casual Visitors	49	0
Other	26	9

As can be noted, those who have made use of F.R.E.D.D.'s materials during both project periods have been primarily students and teachers in special education classes. These have included classes for educable and trainable mentally retarded, learning disabled, and emotionally disturbed students. In addition, clients at

*In 1974, all handicapped persons served were listed as "clients." In 1975, those in the schools were listed as "students", while those in other facilities were listed as "clients".

sheltered workshops and at programs sponsored by local associations for the retarded utilized the resources of F.R.E.D.D. In 1975, the librarian on occasion also visited retarded residents of rest and convalescent facilities by car in an effort to share a number of F.R.E.D.D.'s resources.

Circulation figures for 1974 and 1975 are shown on the chart below:

	1974	1975
Materials	62 days	35 days
Books (picture)	481	133
Books (with text)		474
Cassettes/Records	48	46
Newspapers	0	3
Filmstrips	0	25
Realia	49	191
Pamphlets	0	81
Professional Books	34	19
Equipment	0	1

Throughout the project periods there was considerable student and teacher interest in the bookmobile's collection of toys and teaching games (Realia). Teachers expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to make use of these materials on a trial basis prior to ordering them for their own school's collection. Records and picture books were also frequently sought by students and other clients, including those in rest homes, who were unable to read. The books written at high-interest,

low-vocabulary level were very popular with persons who did possess reading skills, and these materials were often and well used. It was believed that a larger percentage of materials for the lower-functioning retarded persons (i.e., picture books, records, and toys) would have been considered an advantage to this collection.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Materials

B. Connecticar

C. Locations

D. Mobility

E. Vehicle

F. Resource Sharing

G. Public Libraries

From the experiences gained during the two project periods, several recommendations have been made for the continuation of this program or one of similar intent.

A. Materials: The collection as exists was well used by diversified groups of people. However, requests for more picture books were frequent, and in view of this, it is recommended that more of these be added to F.R.E.D.D.'s collection as well as more toys, games, and records, to better meet the needs of the younger and/or lower functioning client.

B. Connecticar: The Connecticar system for return of borrowed materials proved to be most successful, especially due to the work efforts of many public librarians who agreed to assist with this aspect of the project. Had this system not been available, it

would have been necessary for the F.R.E.D.D. librarian to have returned to the bookmobile sites in order to collect those materials which had been on loan; however, this method would have been extremely time-consuming and hence, ineffective.

C. Locations: It was discovered that the bookmobile was most visited when located at educational, vocational and residential facilities serving the developmentally disabled. Among those visited were special education classes in the public schools, sheltered workshops, programs sponsored by local associations for the retarded, and rest and convalescent homes which have mentally retarded persons in residence.

D. Mobility: It is believed that more frequent moves within each town also contributed to the success of the bookmobile. This was found to be necessary in order to accomodate the towns' limited ability to transport students as well as the clients' limited accessibility to use of public transportation. When the bookmobile was parked at the clients' settings,

the response was most favorable. This response seemed to indicate that a need was being met, and in several instances, the desire was expressed for continued service.

E. Vehicle: The vehicle itself was found to be quite large and cumbersome to drive. Very low gas mileage and frequent repairs proved it to be uneconomical. In addition, its design prohibited visitors in wheelchairs from entering and perusing the materials. The steps and turns also made the entry difficult for other physically handicapped persons. It is, therefore, recommended that a smaller vehicle be used, such as a van or a station wagon. This would be more economical and easier to drive and move about. Materials could be displayed either on the van itself or within the facility being visited, such that the arrangement would be barrier free to a client's physical handicaps.

F. Resource Sharing: In an effort to provide a maximum amount of resources in the area of mental retardation to teachers, parents, staff and volunteers of the

the Regional Centers, and other interested persons; a system of resource-sharing is suggested as being most beneficial. The State Library's Inter-Library Loan Centers have already been utilized to increase both the professional and client resources that were offered on F.R.E.D.D. It is suggested that those library resources which are owned by all of the State Office of Mental Retardation's Regional Centers be placed on computer, giving each Center access to the computer listing. These professional and/or client materials could thereby be shared, and resources available to each Regional Center would be multiple, minimizing duplication as much as possible.

G. Public Libraries: Questionnaires which public librarians had completed in 1974 indicated that although several libraries had some materials on the subject of mental retardation suitable for parents, teachers, and interested laymen, very few libraries had programs or materials for the mentally retarded patrons, themselves. In some instances, librarians indicated that budgetary limitations restricted the implementation of library

service to this special population. It is felt that their prior participation in the F.R.E.D.D. program and the availability of information concerning success of the project will serve to make librarians more aware of the continued need that exists. It is suggested that displays be created by the Regional Center personnel which would include materials that were used on the bookmobile as well as professional books, and pamphlets concerning mental retardation. These displays would be placed in public libraries and may serve to heighten awareness of librarians and the public, for the need to provide adequate library services to the developmentally disabled.

In summary, it may be concluded that the F.R.E.D.D. project has had positive effects in having provided a variety of libray resource materials to the developmentally disabled and in demonstrating the need that exists for this type of specialized library service. Looking toward the future, it is hoped that an improvement in the economy may permit the public and/or private sector involved with or interested in serving the developmentally disabled an opportunity to

maintain implementation of this specialized service as statistics and personal contact indeed substantiates the need.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy H. Dewald

V. APPENDIX

A. Original Grant Proposal

B. Questionnaire and Results

TITLE OF PROJECT

Making Library Resources Available to the Retarded Who Reside in the Community.

RECEIVERS OF GRANT AWARD

Waterbury Regional Center and the Central Connecticut Regional Center in a cooperative effort to meet the library resource needs of their respective populations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Recipients of grant, rationale for project proposal and intent for recommendations.

The Waterbury Regional Center and the Central Connecticut Regional Center have been in existence for approximately five years, and each have developed programs in an effort to meet the needs of their particular regions. Similarities exist between these Centers as both seek out available resources to serve the retardates

living in the community. The number of these persons steadily increases as those formally residing within the institutions are being placed at an increased pace in community settings which offer residential care.

The Regional Centers believe that the award of the requested monies would allow for the review, expansion, and/or development of a library resource system. The initial intent of this proposal would be to provide reading and audio visual materials such as would be appropriate to the ability level of the retardate, via this proposed system, material would be available and within easy access for all community persons wishing to take advantage of this service. In addition, it is believed that the community would then recognize their responsibility to make such purposeful opportunities for the use of leisure time available to the retarded.

II. PROJECT PROPOSALS AND METHOD OF COORDINATION

The Regional Centers, in an attempt to provide these retardates with library resource materials is recommending that a Librarian II be employed to plan and implement this proposal which is offered for your consideration. As a trained specialist in Library Science, this employee would assume responsibility:

a. To survey the current level of library service offered to the retardates living in the community,

b. To establish a viable interim mobile library program based on anticipations that each community served by the Regional Center will eventually recognize their responsibility to provide such resources within their public library and school facilities.

The Waterbury Regional Center will assume fiscal and supervisory responsibility for hiring and scheduling of the Librarian's activities. In conjunction with the Central Connecticut Regional Center, the program proposals will be developed and implemented in a cooperative effort so as to optimize the level of services provided to the retardates of their regions.

It will be the developmental responsibility of the Librarian II to conceptualize the overall plan for the operation and evaluations of the grant proposal program.

The Regional Centers' Directors of Education will weekly review the direction and progress of the grant proposal in relation to the realization of the program's objectives.

III. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES AND EVALUATION

a. Proposal to develop library resources for the retarded.

1. Primary objective in recommending this aspect of the project proposal:

To Insure:

a. A model program within two geographic regions for expansion of community library services,

b. A support system which for an interim period will make available to the retarded assorted library materials,

c. The retarded person's right to learn at a level which stimulates interest, motivates enthusiasm and expands awareness of the world and those persons about them.

d. Constructive utilization of leisure time for for those retardates residing in the community.

2. Secondary objective in recommending this aspect of the project proposal:

To Offer: Those involved in library service within the community, a rationale for the need to consider making available these "special library resources".

To Serve: As a catalyst for the development of library services which would meet the specific needs of the retarded.

IV. RECEIVER OF PROPOSED LIBRARY SERVICES

Approximately 1,500 retardates who reside in the 35 towns served by

these two regional centers will benefit from the proposed program.

Initially: a. Through a mobile library program which will provide resource materials. Specifically adapted and/or developed for the retarded.

b. As these retarded persons, their families, or those responsible for their supervision become familiar with the library resources made available through the Regional Centers, greater justification can be made for the provision of such services within community based facilities.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Library_____

Address_____

Town_____ Zip_____

Telephone_____ Librarian_____

Library Hours_____ to_____ Not applicable to data collection (N/A)

Are there architectural barriers in your facility? Yes 12 No 8 Did not understand question 2 No reply 5

Does your library have materials about mental retardation suitable for parents, teachers or interested laymen? Yes 22 No 4 No reply 1

Types: Journals 4 Books 17 Films 3 Filmstrips 0 Pamphlets 11 Other

Do you currently have programs for retarded patrons? Yes 5 No 19 No Reply 3

Normal hours for programs? N/A

Are town residents only accepted to program? Yes 1 No 5 No Reply 21

Maximum capacity of patrons in program.

Present number of retarded patrons involved in program.

Date program started.

Are both sexes accepted?

Usual ratio of staff to patron?

Please Indicate by checking the lowest level acceptable in program. Mild Moderate Severe Profound

Upper Age Limit

Lower Age Limit

Number of Respondents to this section: 4 No reply: 23

For the following items, please indicate the lowest ability type you would accept in your program?

Toilet training: Completely tidy Partially tidy Untidy

Ambulation: No Motor Defects Poor Coordination Walk With Support Wheelchair

Visual Impairment: Slight Severe Blind

Auditory Impairment: Slight Severe Deaf

Acceptable Level of Inter-Personal Relations:

Behavior is in accord with age level
Behavior moderately deficient
Behavior severely deficient
Behavior slightly deficient

Motor Skills:

In Accord With Age Level
Slightly Deficient
Moderately Deficient
Severely deficient

Communication Skills:

No Speech Deficiency Some Speech Deficiency Can Communicate Needs: Little or No Speech

Would you accept the following into program:	Cerebral Palsied Epileptic With Learning Disabilities
Does your library have materials suitable for mentally retarded patrons?	Yes 6 No 1 No Reply 20
Check Items Available:	Books (picture) 6 Books (with Text) 5 Films 2 Filmstrips 2 Cassettes/Records 4 Posters 1 Pamphlets 1 Others 0
Number of questionnaires sent?	80
Number of questionnaires returned:	27
Respondents:	Libraries 22 Associations for Retarded Citizens 2 Schools 1 Training Centers 2

Note: Five librarians who returned the questionnaire indicated that budgetary or staff limitations restricted the establishment or expansion of library services to this special population.

We list with appreciation the following people who have contributed to this project:

Office of Mental Retardation

Mr. Gareth D. Thorne
Deputy Commissioner

Waterbury Regional Center

Mr. Elliott Ressler
Superintendent

Mrs. Maggie Reilly
Chief, Volunteer Services

Central Connecticut Regional Center

Mr. Michael Dillon, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Mrs. Laura Wilhite, Director
Education and Training

Mrs. Marilyn Aligata
Chief, Volunteer Services

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Roger LaJeunesse, Director
Education and Training
Central Connecticut Regional Center

Connecticut State Library

Mr. Walter Brahm
State Librarian

Mr. Samuel Molod
Associate State Librarian

Mr. Dominic Persempere
Head, Services to State Agencies and Institutions

Mrs. Ilene Tobey, Consultant to Health Libraries

Mr. John Landry
Public Information Officer

+ + + + + +

Candace Hall, Librarian
March to August, 1974

Mrs. Margaret Cleland
Public Relations
Connecticut State Library

Volunteer Services:
Cheshire Junior Women's Club
Joanne Klinski

Report Prepared By:

Nancy Dewald, Librarian

Edited:

Joyce Pellegrino, Coordinator
Special Projects

Typist:

Maryann Pragit